GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:461
ANSWERED ON:23.12.2005
AREA OFFICERS SCHEME FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Tripathy Shri Braja Kishore

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced any Area Officers Scheme for Rural Development;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the aims and objectives thereof;

(c) whether Area Officers have visited the allocated States during 2004-05;

(d) if so, the details of the observations made by them in regard to the implementation of Rural Development Programmes;

(e) whether all the States have furnished their action taken reports on the issues raised by the Area Officers during 2003-04 and 2004-05;

(f) if so, the names of the States yet to furnish such report; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to check the mal-practices in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes in the country ?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement refereed in reply to part (a) to (g) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 461 due for Answer on 23.12.2005.

1 . The Ministry of Rural Development has introduced Area Officers` Schemes w.e.f. 1.1.1994 which aims at Monitoring the major programmes of the Ministry with special reference to quality, adherence to implementation guidelines, flow of funds, proper utilization of funds and achievements of physical and financial targets etc, through field visits. Senior Officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above are assigned specific districts of the States for periodic visits and monitoring.

2. 26 Area Officers of the Ministry have visited their allocated States during 2004- 05. The brief observations of the Area Officers are given in Annexure −I.

3. While sending the observations and issues brought out in the report of the Area Officers, the State Governments are requested to furnish the Action Taken Report. The Action Taken Reports have not been received from the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tripura, Meghalaya, Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Uttaranchal, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Orissa for the years 2003-04 and 2004-05. The Ministry has regularly advised the State Governments to furnish these reports.

4. In order to check mal-practices, the Ministry has evolved a comprehensive system of monitoring the execution of the Programmes through periodic Progress Reports received from the States/UTs, field visits by Area Officers of the Ministry and discussions with the State Secretaries and with the Project Directors of the District Rural Development Agencies/Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishads/Panchayats, monitoring by the District Level Monitoring agencies and National Level Monitors. The Ministry has adopted a four pronged strategy comprising

(i) creation of awareness about the schemes

(ii) transparency

(iii) people`s partnership and

(iv) accountability which helps to reduce lapses in programme implementation.

Annexure-I

Annexure referred in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 461 due for reply on 23.12.2005.

The main observations of the Area Officers are given below:

On the whole, programmes are being implemented in almost all the Districts in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development.

The rural poor have been benefited and a number of them have crossed the poverty line over the years.

The Area Officers have documented a number of success stories in regard to micro-enterprises development, provision of self employment, improvement in quality of life of people, solidarity of Self Help Groups etc.

A large number of durable community and social assets have been created under the wage employment programme in several districts of the country. These assets, by and large, have proved useful to the community.

In several States houses built under IAY has been very useful in improving the quality and living environment of the rural poor. Beneficiary selection under IAY has also been largely made by the Gram Sabhas.

People`s participation in programme implementation is seen in almost all the States

There is a visible improvement in the socio economic life of the village community.

The Area Officers have also brought out certain deficiencies in programme implementation which are as follows: -

In some cases wrong selection of beneficiaries/swarozgaries is reported

In a few cases there is delay in release of State share to the Implementing Agencies

There is bunching of loan applications under SGSY/delay in disbursement of loan to the SHGs

At times there is lack of coordination among various Implementing Agencies/Line Departments.

In a few cases the need to strengthen the monitoring arrangement is felt.

Shortage of staff in Block and Districts is reported.

There is wage differential in the male and female workers in some cases.

Distribution of foodgrains under SGRY sometimes is delayed mainly because of the low priority accorded by the FCI in supply of grains under this programme.